

**CAMDEN DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN  
PUBLIC FORUM #2  
March 14, 2012**

The 95 attendees at the Forum were asked to break into ten groups to answer 4 questions regarding the Lachman Team's presentation. These are the results, reported back to the meeting from the break-out groups, and sorted here into common categories of response. The order of those categories is not an indication of the priority of importance these issues were assigned by the participants.

**1. What are your first impressions of the Streetscape Concept?**

**Overall Impressions:**

Positive: Group #1 – wholehearted support, but using streetscape design elements effective in Belfast, Rockland and Bath as examples that worked to control traffic and create pedestrian atmosphere doesn't relate to Camden – they all have by-passes; Group #2 – streetscape design very positive for residents; Group #3 – good 1<sup>st</sup> impression especially like downtown bump outs with trees & benches, but not the resulting loss of parking; Group #4 – like the softening of downtown appearance with visually appealing design like bump outs and trees, and like that Plan stresses our quality of life – this can be used to attract jobs; Group #5 – Excellent design that will work; Group #6 - Strongly favor bump outs and promoting pedestrian-friendly concept; Group #7 – Good concepts but don't overuse bump outs – too many is confusing to the driver; Group #8 – Some examples used won't work in Camden because traffic pattern here is different. Too many ideas to implement all at once – move slowly; Group #9 – Liked the Plan and the presentation, but it is a hard concept to imagine in place. Maintain the integrity of the Downtown and don't carry the theme too far; and Group #10 – Concerned that too much streetscape and landscaping will make Camden look like other larger Towns, but changes are needed for pedestrian safety.

**2. What aspects do you support and why? Do you have a favorite?**

Bump Outs:      Like idea for making pedestrian safer (3);  
                      Like seating areas and plantings (4);  
                      Like traffic-calming results;  
                      Helpful intersection improvements;  
                      Safety benefits: defines traffic and pedestrian spaces;  
                      Combine brick sidewalks with concrete bump outs perhaps to further define areas;

Crosswalks:      Ladder style: Yes - more visible and safer for pedestrians; make the crosswalks concrete with brick set in as detail;

- Gateways:        Like the concept (all);  
                      Firms up where the edges of Downtown are;  
                      Critical to setting the stage for entering Downtown;
- Parking:
- Loss of parking spaces:
    - In favor of restricting parking to enhance Downtown;
    - Like trolley route between parking areas;
    - OK to give up spaces for the streetscape design - benefits are worth it;
  - Pay for parking/meters:
    - Raises “parking awareness” of value-added parking;
    - Support parking restrictions – timed spaces, etc;
    - Support parking fees;
    - Create financial incentives to limit vehicular use;
    - Like parking meters – many Downtowns have meters;
    - Charging for parking keeps people from driving around Town looking for spaces after 2-hour limit is up – will help with traffic;
  - Other:
    - Like designated delivery zones – but where will they be and will there be enough room; Designate delivery times as well;
    - Like idea of on-line apps for parking;
    - Try un-lined parking concept to increase spaces available (2);
    - Like development of shared parking concept;
    - “Encourage” Downtown employees to use more remote parking;
- River Walk/Other walks:
- Great way for downtown workers to get exercise;
  - Like walking trails linked to outlying areas concept;
  - Like development of on-line walking tour apps;
  - Like River Walk to Mill Pond Park very much;
  - Like Mill Pond Park idea – would like more parks – keep walk going to a park at the Tannery as well;
  - Like River Walk to bring Downtown energy toward Mill;
  - Great pedestrian enhancement;
- Signage:
- Like consistency of design; like color-coded concept;
  - It is important to help people get where they want to go;
  - Need this kind of organized sign program;
  - Good simple concept for signage – especially need directions to parking;
  - Signage directing to parking areas can help free up Route 1 parking;
  - Like business directional signs on kiosks in bump-outs;
- Other:     Like the Opera House proposed improvements – will increase use of facility;

Streetlights: Don't copy the current design – make all of the lamps down-lighted  
– will encourage more people to live Downtown if lighting isn't intrusive;  
Current lighting is too bright;

### **3. Which aspect concern you – and why?**

- Bump Outs:** Loss of four lanes of traffic on Mechanic at Route 1 not good;  
Winter road maintenance impacted by bump-outs that won't be used for sitting - perhaps there is a way to make them seasonal? How do you deal with snow removal?  
Take away too many prime parking spaces - Locals like the 15 minute spaces (2);  
Keep size and number to scale for a small Downtown;  
Try in one area first to see if it works and is accepted;  
Is one needed at Atlantic Ave as well?
- Crosswalks:** Boxed design of multiple crosswalks: not attractive; confusing.  
Ladder style: No (5)
- Gateways:** Concerned that creation of curb cuts at Stop & Go will make traffic worse;  
Move Southern Gateway location further south – perhaps to Town Line (4);  
Move Chamber to new Gateway – call it a welcome center (3);  
Make Chamber building into a Visitors' Center - not the Chamber (2);  
Redesign at Stop & Go makes intersection even more confusing;  
Southern Gateway design needs re-working;  
Union Street and Belmont intersection is dangerous and should be addressed in the Plan;
- Parking:**
- Loss of parking spaces:  
Results will create an inconvenience for residents;  
Businesses won't like this because it will take visitors away from their storefronts;  
Need to keep parking on Public Landing (2) – instead plant more trees, design a better lay-out, make walking there safer, soften the design;  
Create more very short-term parking spaces where they make sense – where people do quick errands;
- Pay for parking/meters:  
Need discounted rates or Parking Cards for locals;  
No to meters (5) - include plans for a parking kiosk where people can buy parking tickets – locals get discount;  
No to any pay for parking – too complicated to manage;

Presence of meters is not welcoming;  
Parking meters are less negative than a parking ticket - but both are negative;  
Be thoughtful in developing a charging system for parking – look at other Towns to see what has worked and what has not;

Other:

Leave parking alone – there is no problem;  
Don't need a shuttle – it doesn't work;  
Parking requirements of Zoning Ordinance need to be removed – they restrict growth and development in the Downtown and are not necessary;  
Need to pin point locations of outlying parking areas;

River Walk/Other walks:

Concerned that Harbor Walk has disappeared from Plan;  
Work on links to Snow Bowl and Lake Megunticook;  
Need to see more detail on how the River Walk links to Main Street;  
Include pedestrian connectivity to parking from River Walk;

Signage:

Stop sign at Union and Route 1 – language needs clarity – current design dangerous;  
No to signs for walking trails – at least not painted stripes on sidewalks.  
No to too many signs (5);  
One large map instead (2);  
Sign concept will complicate finding the way; too many already - too cluttered;  
Keep signage simple and clear – this is a small Town, no complicated program needed;

Other:

Keep design simple; keep authenticity and preserve historic character – no “Disney World” here;  
More street trees (2) – perhaps small flowering trees as an added attraction;  
Implement overall streetscape design in phases;

**4. Are there additional considerations that have not been addressed that you believe should be?**

► **#1 Complaint: There is no focus on Year-round Vitality:**

No year-round business focus to Plan (8): Where are the year-round jobs; need to stress bringing year-round regular shops and stores back to downtown; bring back self-sufficiency of Town – ability to get what you need in town; Economics not addressed sufficiently; Economics needs to address regional issues not just Camden; No mention of implementation of the Economic Plan

- Public Landing: Should be addressed (5) – one of best parcels in Town and underutilized as parking; want a Harbor Park there and Harbor Walk; protect fishermen's access
- Address use of first floor of Opera House (3)
- Address use of Tannery Site – park, location of Farmer's Market – draw people out that way as well (2)
- Expand development of on-line apps
- Current condition of sidewalks (lack of maintenance): How will the Town be able to take care of even more sidewalks and curbing?
- No changes should be made that require a change in zoning away from industrial or commercial; Plan should include recommendations for changes to Zoning to make Plan work
- Make Bayview Street 1-way
- Address ways to attract younger tourists – nightlife, a theatre – how to fund?
- Business groups from outside Downtown should be included and involved
- The Farmer's Market should be made more visible
- How do we encourage incubator businesses?